



WHIP

Early Successional Habitats

WHIP is the Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program

The purpose of this category of WHIP is to create, enhance, or maintain early successional habitats to benefit native grassland wildlife. Species such as bobwhite quail, wild turkeys, cottontail rabbits, and other “farm wildlife” thrive in this habitat type. Several rare species including the grasshopper sparrow, bobolink, eastern meadowlark and northern harrier also need grasslands to survive.

Cost-share info: Up to 75% of the actual cost of implementing early successional habitat improvement projects can be provided to landowners by NRCS.

Eligible Lands: Any non-federal lands, at least 5 acres in size, eligible for farmland assessment and suitable for grassland wildlife species .

Length of the project: Plans will be developed for a five-year to ten-year period. All practices must be maintained for the length of the plan.

How to apply: Contact your local NRCS Service Center for an application. See reverse side for locations and contact information.

Cost-share is available for:

- Site preparation for seeding
- All seed and other materials needed
- All equipment costs related to seeding
- Mowing and prescribed burning for maintenance of grasslands

Cost-share is NOT authorized for:

- Farm roads, buildings, blinds
- Incentive payments for leaving fields idle, fields must be managed
- Backyard wildlife plantings



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The Story of One WHIP Early Successional Habitat Project in NJ

In the 1990s, the Phillipsburg Riverview Organization (PRO) was an integral part of the preservation of over 600 acres of farmland in Alpha and Pohatcong Townships in Warren County. In that intensively farmed area, PRO is now part owner and manager of a 130-acre parcel known as the Pohatcong Grassland tract. In 1999, NRCS provided technical and financial assistance through WHIP to establish native warm season grasses on this tract. The land had been in hay and grain crops for many years. Fields were tilled and some herbicides were used to control weeds. A native grass/forb mix was seeded in June of 1999 in several crop fields. Since then, over 70 acres have been seeded to mixtures of indiangrass, little bluestem, big bluestem, switchgrass and native wildflowers. The initial success was slowed due to drought and weed competition, but today the seedlings are a resounding success. The native grasses are slow to establish, and establishment



PRO volunteers use the US Fish & Wildlife Service's no-till native grass drill to overseed native grasses and forbs in late May 2001.

often takes 2-3 years. Once established, the native grasses need fewer inputs (such as lime and fertilizer) than traditional grass plantings. The tall native grasses have provided habitat to grasshopper sparrows, bobolinks, northern harriers, upland sandpipers and more. Now that grasses are fully established, fields are mowed or burned every other year to keep woody vegetation out, and maintain the grassland ecosystem. The New Jersey Forest Fire Service has conducted prescribed burns at the site for maintenance of the native grassland. The deep-rooted native grasses thrive under the burning regime.

NRCS Service Centers

Freehold- (732)462-1079X3

Serving Mercer, Middlesex & Monmouth

Frenchtown-(908)782-4614X3

Serving Hunterdon, Somerset, & Union

Hackettstown-(908)852-2576 X3

Serving Sussex, Warren & Morris

Hainesport-(609)267-0811 X3

Serving Burlington, Camden, & Ocean

Vineland-(856)205-1225X3

Serving Atlantic, Cape May, & Cumberland

Woodstown-((856)769-1126X3

Serving Gloucester & Salem

Morris Plains-(973)538-1552

Serving Bergen, Hudson, Essex, Passaic, Morris
& Union



NJ Forest Fire Service personnel conduct a prescribed burn at the Pohatcong Grasslands in March 2002. Burning helps control weeds, woody vegetation and maintain native grasses.